

BOOK REVIEWS

Our Wild Orchids*

AN APPRECIATION

In this satisfying volume we have a record and a revelation; a record of careful investigations, a revelation of what may be accomplished by persistent and loving study. The area represented by the seventy-two species, figured and described, is that of Gray's Manual, the nomenclature that of Ames' Enumeration. One European species, *Habenaria albida* is added to our previous listing, as are *Malaxis spicata* brought from Florida and *Listera borealis* from far north into our limits; and *Malaxis paludosa*, recorded in Gray from one station, is now reported from two others and said to be well established in Ontario. It is demonstrated conclusively that *Isotria affinis* is a good species. Four notable species are chosen for the colored plates.

The foreward by Professor Ames is sympathetic; the authors introduction, the keys, the use of popular names and the "special features" designed to facilitate amateur study, have distinct values.

This long-desired book fulfills the hopes with which it has been awaited. The result of years of patient study, tireless pursuit and very intelligent scrutiny, it brings equally to the professional and the amateur botanist, a wealth of information and of incentive toward wider, more discerning, more satisfying acquaintance with members of the Royal Family of plants. This reviewer, who has studied in their homes many of the species figured and described, can appreciate the indefatigable diligence, the refusal to be baffled, that made possible these unparalleled records. Opportunities for travel denied to most

* *Our Wild Orchids*. Trials and Portraits.

By Frank Morris and Edward A. Eames

With a foreword by Oakes Ames

Professor of Botany in Harvard University

Large octavo. 450 pages, including a complete glossary. With 130 full-page illustrations, four in color. \$7.50.

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amateurs and technical equipment possessed by few have been invaluable auxiliaries in the quests through field and forest, over "moor and fen"; but these material helps would have produced scant results without the drive of that dominant interest which, again and again, has transformed "trials" into "trails!"

A short treatise might easily be written in detailed comment on the stories told by these enthusiasts, twice-told, by camera and pen, incomparably told by each partner in this pioneer enterprise. It must suffice to name here a few of the more striking touches: as the detecting of the bluish tinge in the leaves of the Ram's Head; the vertically-folded overlap in the lip of *Cypripedium passerinum*; the unique nipple of *Habenaria flava*; the aspect of the spur in *Habenaria clavellata*, "like the slender abdomen of a stinging insect"; the apt characterization of the flowers of *Habenaria hyperborea*, "snuggling right up to the main stem"; the "blending of syringa with cloves" in the fragrance of the flowers of *Habenaria dilatata*; "Hooker's hooks", a delicious pen-picturing; the perianth of *Malaxis monophylla* "not so much white as colorless or faded like withered tissue." The keen scrutiny and trained judgement shown in such illuminating phrases is evidenced also in many sane conclusions reached by comparing varied experiences, such as: the "smothering" of *Cypripedium acaule* by ericaceous growth that was at first protective (this fate befalls *Arethusa*, too, and other species); the recognition of the power of adaptation of many species under different, even contrasted conditions, (hence the inaccuracy of some book-descriptions); the periodicity of many, notably the "rarer" kinds; the necessity, if we would search thoroughly, of standing still and gazing long.

The reader of these glowing pages is enthralled as much by the fascinating stories and the exquisite pictures as by the marvelous results obtained. There is a certain aggravation, to one accustomed to finding the less common species in small groups, it at all, in reading of such thrilling experiences as seeing hundreds at one time, or of embracing in one sweeping glance three *Habenarias*, besides *H. albida*, a rare form of *Cypripedium* and *Listera cordata*; though such rich variety can be duplicated in more than one bog in northeastern Vermont. To one whose botanizing has been done to the south of "the unguarded boundary," it seems odd to have the White *Malaxis* reported as more com-

mon than the Green, and *Corallorrhiza trifida* as one of the commonest of the genus. These records indicate, of course, local observations; but it is inaccurate to allude to *Tipularia* as probably not self-propagating so far north as New York, or to *Calypso* as having been found formerly in the neighborhood of nearly every city in New York State—whatever may have been true in Ontario.

The makers of this great book, creators, in truth, of the idea as well as of the beautiful structure, are alive to all aspects of Nature; as may readily be inferred from their discriminating comments on less-noticed details and their sane conclusions about distribution and associations. Allusions are frequent to scenes of landscape beauty and to incidents of animal life. There is a "bedtime story" of fox cubs that would gladden every youngster and a tale of an enterprising mink that thrills. When this book is in every public library, as it may be expected to be, the perusal of its attractive pages will rouse in many a boy and girl a true enthusiasm for the wonders of the out-of-doors. At last "our wild orchids" are introduced persuasively to a widening constituency. A grateful reader records here his sense of obligation.

H. M. DENSLow

CHELSEA SQUARE, N. Y.

A Fungous Flora of Manitoba made its appearance last October from the press of Longmans, Green & Co. The text is by the distinguished Canadian mycologist, Dr. G. R. Bisby and A. H. R. Buller, both of Manitoba, and Dr. John Dearness of western Ontario, with a preface by Mr. E. J. Butler of the Imperial Bureau of Mycology at Kew, England. The work is unusually comprehensive, complete and accurate, and is much more than a list of species. The topographic and climatic conditions of the several areas are described, the relationship of the phanerogamic flora, observations on carpophilous fungi, parasites of man, geographic distribution, historical account, rare species, and many other topics are treated with considerable fulness. The compact list of species, which includes myxomycetes, bacteria and lichens, occupies somewhat over half of the volume. Hosts, substrata, localities and many interesting observations are recorded. There are 45 new species and 2 new